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ACTION EAP-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00
	DS-00	FBIE-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00
	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SS-00
	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	R-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02
	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/006W			

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FM AMEMBASSY HANOI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0141

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HANOI 001318

SIPDIS

STATE FOR E, EAP/BCLTV

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/15/10

TAGS: [PREL](#) [VM](#) [US](#)

SUBJECT: MFA OFFICIAL ON STRAINS IN U.S.-SRV RELATIONS

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES DENNIS HARTER.
REASONS: 1.5 (B) (D).

2. (C) BEGIN SUMMARY: MFA AMERICAS DEPT HEAD NGUYEN MANH HUNG RECENTLY LAMENTED TO THE AMBASSADOR STRAINS THAT HAVE ENTERED U.S.-VIETNAM RELATIONS. SPECIFICALLY, THE GVN HAS TAKEN EXCEPTION TO SEVERAL NON-BINDING CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTIONS WHICH ARE CRITICAL OF THE SRV. HE URGED THE AMBASSADOR TO "USE HIS INFLUENCE" TO
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STEM SUCH ACTIONS. AMB. PETERSON REPLIED HE COULD TALK TO LEGISLATORS BUT NEITHER HE NOR THE PRESIDENT COULD TELL WHAT THE CONGRESS SHOULD DO OR NOT DO. BOTH AGREED THAT THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF THE WAR HAS RAISED EMOTIONS ON BOTH SIDES. HUNG CONVEYED AGAIN MFA COMPLAINTS OVER THE ACTIVITIES OF THE U.S. MISSION AND SOME PERSONNEL. THE AMBASSADOR REBUFFED SUCH COMPLAINTS AS NEITHER JUSTIFIED NOR WARRANTED AND STRESSED THE NEED FOR TRUST. END SUMMARY.

3. (C) IN A MAY 25 MEETING ON OTHER ISSUES, MFA AMERICAS DEPT DIRECTOR NGUYEN MANH HUNG LAMENTED TO AMBASSADOR PETERSON TENSIONS THAT HAD RECENTLY CREPT INTO THE U.S.-VIETNAM RELATIONSHIP. HUNG COMPLAINED ABOUT SEVERAL NON-BINDING RESOLUTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION IN CONGRESS WHICH ARE CRITICAL OF THE SRV. HE SAID HOUSE RESOLUTION 295 PARTICULARLY IS "VERY HOSTILE" TOWARD HANOI (NOTE: 295 IS A SENSE OF THE CONGRESS RESOLUTION THAT ATTACKS THE MONOPOLY ON POWER OF THE CPV. END NOTE.) HOUSE RESOLUTION 322 (WHICH PRAISES THE SACRIFICES OF SOUTH VIETNAM'S ARMED FORCES) IS ANOTHER ONE WHICH THE GVN FINDS OFFENSIVE, HUNG SAID. HE URGED AMBASSADOR PETERSON TO "USE HIS INFLUENCE" TO PREVENT SUCH CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS.

4. (C) WHILE NOTING THAT NEITHER HE NOR THE PRESIDENT HAS POWERS OVER THE U.S. CONGRESS, AMBASSADOR PETERSON SAID HE WOULD HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS IN CONNECTION WITH HIS JUNE 15 TESTIMONY ON JACKSON-VANIK.

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5. (C) HUNG SAID THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF THE WAR HAS RAISED EMOTIONS ON BOTH SIDES. WHILE ADMINISTRATION FIGURES SUCH AS THE AMBASSADOR ASSURE HANOI THAT THE USG HAS NO INTENTIONS TO DESTABILIZE THE GVN, AT THE SAME TIME CONGRESS TAKES ACTIONS WHICH INDICATE OTHERWISE. SOME IN THE GVN, E.G., THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, TAKE THESE ACTIONS AS EFFORTS TO UNDERMINE VIETNAM'S POLITICAL SYSTEM. AMB. PETERSON ASSURED HUNG THAT THIS WAS DEFINITELY NOT THE CASE. WE WANT A VIETNAM THAT IS STABLE AND PROSPEROUS AND A BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP THAT GROWS, HE SAID. HE STRESSED THE NEED FOR THE MFA TO EDUCATE VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS ON THE U.S. SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT, SPECIFICALLY, THE ROLE OF CONGRESS. THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY INDEED HAS RAISED EMOTIONS, HE SAID. THERE HAVE BEEN STATEMENTS ABOUT THE U.S. FROM VIETNAMESE

OFFICIALS THAT HAVE ALSO BEEN INFLAMMATORY. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR LEADERS ON BOTH SIDES NOT TO GET TOO UPSET OVER SOME OF THE RHETORIC BEING CHURNED OUT BY SOME PLAYERS. AMB. PETERSON SAID RECENT STRAINS HAVE CAUSED HIM TO WORRY ABOUT THE DIRECTION OF U.S.-VIETNAM RELATIONS. HUNG AGREED, ADDING THAT STRAINS COULD CONTRIBUTE TO A "VICIOUS CYCLE DOWNWARD." AMB. PETERSON RECOMMENDED THAT, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, BOTH SIDES AIR THEIR GRIEVANCES PRIVATELY.

16. (C) HUNG AGAIN BROUGHT UP GVN COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF SOME U.S. MISSION STAFF. THIS TIME, IT WAS OVER THE CONTACTS CG HCMC'S POLOFF HAS HAD CONTACT RECENTLY WITH HOA HAO DISSIDENTS. THE MFA'S BRANCH OFFICE IN HCMC (SNV - FOREIGN OFFICE) HAD SENT A NOTE
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TO THE MFA ON THIS. AMB. PETERSON SAID THAT THE MFA COULD RESPOND TO ITS COUNTERPART OFFICE AS THEY PLEASED. HE WANTED TO REITERATE TO THE MFA THAT U.S. MISSION ACTIVITIES ARE TRANSPARENT AND FOR A GOOD PURPOSE. IN THE CASE IN QUESTION, THE POLOFF WAS COLLECTING INFORMATION THAT WOULD ASSIST US IN OUR HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE WITH THE GVN AND FOR RESPONDING TO CONGRESSIONAL QUERIES. WITHOUT FIRST-HAND INFORMATION, THE USG IS SUBJECT TO OFTEN ERRONEOUS OR INCOMPLETE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THIRD PARTIES. TOO OFTEN SUCH INFORMATION IS EXAGGERATED OR PLAIN WRONG. WE SHOULD NOT BE RESTRICTED TO WHOM WE MAY SPEAK. "YOU CANNOT EXPECT US NOT TO TALK TO PEOPLE," THE AMBASSADOR ADDED.

17. (C) HUNG NEXT TOOK ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE EMBASSY'S PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION. HE URGED OUR EMBASSY TO "ADHERE TO THE RULES LAID DOWN BY THE MIN. OF CULTURE AND INFORMATION (WHEREBY EMBASSIES ARE REQUIRED TO OBTAIN PRIOR CLEARANCE BEFORE SENDING MAIL TO ANY VIETNAMESE). AMBASSADOR PETERSON REPLIED THAT SUCH A MEASURE IS TOO ONEROUS AND IS UNNECESSARY. "YOU CANNOT EXPECT US NOT TO SEND MATERIALS TO THOSE WHO REQUEST IT," HE SAID. ANY MINISTRY OR ORGANIZATION WHICH DOES NOT WANT TO RECEIVE MAILINGS FROM THE U.S. EMBASSY SHOULD SO INFORM US (NOTE: AS HAS THE MFA. END NOTE.) BUT SUCH DEMANDS REFLECT A LACK OF TRUST IN THE EMBASSY. SUCH A SENTIMENT IS "VERY DANGEROUS," THE AMBASSADOR SAID. THE U.S. EMBASSY HAS WORKED ASSIDUOUSLY TO BUILD TRUST. IT IS THE CORE OF A SOUND RELATIONSHIP.

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18. (C) COMMENT: UNLIKE HIS ANTEDILUVIAN COLLEAGUES IN THE MFA'S PROTOCOL DEPT, HUNG DELIVERED A HARD MESSAGE WITH A SOFT TOUCH. NONETHELESS, THE MESSAGE IS CLEAR: HANOI SEES A USG (ALBIET ONLY FROM RECENT CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS) THAT HAS RECENTLY SHOWN ITSELF HOSTILE TOWARD THE SRV. AS A RESULT, THE MORE PARANOID WITHIN THE SRV APPARATUS VIEW THE U.S. EMBASSY AS THE CATSPAW OF SUCH HOSTILITY. DESPITE OUR REPEATED EFFORTS TO EDUCATE THE VIETNAMESE ON THE DIVISION OF POWERS WITHIN THE USG, THEY EITHER DO NOT GET IT OR CHOOSE NOT TO BELIEVE US. THIS FUNDAMENTAL LACK OF APPRECIATION BY THE VIETNAMESE OF THE AUTONOMOUS ROLE OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT IN DEMOCRACIES IS ALSO A COMPLAINT SHARED BY OTHER WESTERN EMBASSIES HERE WHO HAVE RECEIVED THEIR OWN COMPLAINTS FROM THE MFA OVER ACTIONS BY THEIR RESPECTIVE LEGISLATURES ON A RANGE OF ISSUES BEARING ON VIETNAM.
HARTER

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